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French manuscript of the fourteenth century shows a post-mortem examination conducted openly in the presence of the relatives of the deceased. The physician in full canonicals is at the extreme right. The actual process of examination is being made by three of his assistants. To the left, the first of these deepens, with a knife, the incision that has already been made over the sternum, the second is grasping with his two hands and rolling up the great omentum so as to display the viscera beneath, and the third holds the wand in his right hand, with which he points to the abdomen, while in his left he carries a book.

The artist who went direct to nature, dissecting with his own hands

and observing with his own eyes, obtained better results than the professor with his formal methods. Leonardo da Vinci made admirable anatomical sketches. Michel Angelo is said to be one of the two figures shown in the last illustration, which dates from the end of the fifteenth century.

SULPHURIC ACID AND THE WAR

THE British government is having the foresight to consider problems that will arise after the war and has appointed a departmental committee to report on the post-war disposition of the sulphuric acid and fertilizer trades. Professor T. L. Thorpe



THE FIRST PICTURE OF DISSECTION IN AN ENGLISH-PRINTED BOOK. From the English translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus, printed by Wynkyn de Worde, 1495.

gives in *Nature* an account of the report of the committee, which is of interest in this country as well as in England.

Sulphuric acid is indispensable for warfare and the enormous amount needed in the manufacture of explosives and for other purposes has led to an extraordinary development of the industry in England. Concentrating plants on a large scale have been everywhere erected, and the productive power of the country has reached an amount greatly in excess of the pre-war consumption. The problem of the committee is how this extension can be dealt with in view of the requirements when the war is ended.

According to Professor Thorpe there is one new source of sulphuric acid in England, created by the war, which should be maintained and extended, and that is the production of acid from Australian zinc concentrates. The manufacture of zinc was instituted in England before it was started in Belgium and Germany, but it has not been developed there to the same extent. Although London is the chief zinc market in Europe, the main production of the metal has been in the hands of Germans, who have also acquired a controlling interest in the Belgian concerns. It is said that Germany, with the view of maintaining her practical monopoly in the production and distribution of zinc, gained control of the rich deposits of zinc ores in Australia, and that the great bulk of the Australian concentrates found their way to Belgium and Silesia, mainly by way of Antwerp and Hamburg, Germany's own deposits being meanwhile conserved.

There is one outlet for sulphuric acid which is capable of far greater development, and that is in the manufacture of fertilizers, and especially of superphosphates. There can be no doubt that the food shortage in

England has had a profound effect on agricultural policy, and will lead to a permanent increase in home production. This will necessitate a greatly increased demand for fertilizers, such as sulphate of ammonia, as well as of phosphatic manures. Much ammonia is at present absorbed in the production of nitrate of ammonia, which is needed in the manufacture of munitions. But this ammonia will be liberated after the war, and will be largely converted into sulphate for agricultural use. In the past about 60 per cent. of the sulphuric acid produced in England was absorbed in the manufacture of fertilizers, in which there was a considerable export trade, in addition to the home demands. The changed carrying conditions caused by the war may, it is said, lead to an extension of this export trade, induced, on one hand, by the comparative abundance of cheap sulphuric acid, and, on the other, by the greatly increased demand for fertilizers.

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

THE annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and of the national scientific societies affiliated with it will be held at Baltimore, from December 27 to December 31. Boston had been selected as the place of meeting this year, action recommending that the meeting be held in that city having been taken at the meeting in New York City two years ago. In view, however, of war conditions and of the large number of scientific men now working at Washington, it seemed desirable to select a place to which the amount of traveling would be reduced as much as possible, and where a meeting concerned with problems of national defense and national welfare